

MARVEL 007

[dest_]
[iny_]
[of_X]



SPURRIER
DIAZ
PARSONS
BLEE

LEGION OF X



Krakoa.
Island Sanctuary for Mutantkind.

"Okay, Let's
see..."

"Item 1--memorial service
for Magneto at 4 KST.
Best costumes, please."

Transit.
Teleport Gate Network Hub.

"Item 2--*investigation request* from
Angel at X-Corp. Typical *Warren*--hazy on
details. *Chamber, Husk*--look into it?"

"What
else...?"

"Ah, the new *temple
gate* on Krakoa is
stable, so--business
as usual here in the
Altar. Although...ah..."

The Altar.
Miraculous Bubble
Universe in Legion's Psyche.

"...our Arakkii friends in the *Topaz
Legion* have decided to stay. They
like the *training facilities*. Let's
be welcoming and respectful...and
not give them any reason to get violent."

"I think that's *all*
for now. Any
questions?"

Any
questions
that *don't*
involve my
face?

Ja.



All right, let's get this over with.

Nein, I have not joined a Norwegian metal band.

Nein, I am not here to herald the coming of *Ragnarok*.

And *nein*-- I do not bring coal to naughty kids at Christmas.

Whatever this is, it does not appear to have been caused by a biological trigger.

Pending further investigation.

I do not appear to be the victim of a curse.

Pending further investigation.

And this does not appear to be *contagious* through touch or fluid transfer.

Can confirm.

These *horns* simply appeared overnight. Obviously, the fear is that somebody has *done this* to me--that the *X-Gene* is compromised--

--and I will be consulting *top people* to ensure nobody *else* is at risk. Until *then*?

I'm still *me*. We are still a society *above* physical norms. And...I'm still *asking* you: Go do what we do. *Ja*?

Keep the peace, keep the law, keep the Spark.

Fall out.



LEGION OF X

THE ABYSS GAZES ALSO

To forge a new type of justice fit for Krakoa, NIGHTCRAWLER has assembled a team of LEGIONNAIRES and built an HQ in THE ALTAR: a bubble reality contained in the dreaming psyche of LEGION and adjacent to the Astral Plane.

Already the Legionnaires have tracked down a missing Arakkii god, meted out justice to a demented skinjacker, uncovered corruption within the Great Ring of Arakko, and defended Krakoa and Arakko alike from Celestial wrath.

But they met temptations along the way...and at least one of them has succumbed. First Legion, and then Banshee, happened upon a strange entity on the Astral Plane: a woman named Mother Righteous, who possesses the mysterious power to grant certain wishes -- in exchange for gratitude and devotion -- and to spy on scenes far away. Righteous offered the power of a Ghost Rider to Legion, and when he refused... Banshee took the deal.

What's next for the Spirit of Variance, for David Haller and his Legionnaires? Horrors new and old await...



[NIGHTCRAWLER]



[FABIAN CORTEZ]



[JUGGERNAUT]



[PIXIE]



[DOCTOR NEMESIS]



[MOTHER RIGHTEOUS]



[LEGION]



[BLINDFOLD]



[FORGETMENOT]



[LOST]



[SPIRIT OF VARIANCE/BANSHEE]



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Well if it
isn't **Douglas Ramsey**
in the flesh. What brings
you to the Altar, old
friend?

And,
uh...

...who's yer
pal?

Heh.
Don't you
know?

Oh. Oh,
can't you **see** it,
David? sorry.

Here...here
on the **edge** of the
Astral Plane...in a sphere
unburdened by **technology**...
yes...here we see what lies
behind the froth and
quicksilver...

Hello,
selffriend
David.

Self wishes
to see the **Astral
Plane**.

warlock.



Here.
Take a look at
these, David. You
recognize
them?

Those? Aye,
they're *astral*
blooms. They drift out
of *ideaspace*. Pretty
wee things. Where
did you--?

Self found one
on *Juggernaut's*
shoulder. Discovered
many more on *Krakoa*.
Clinging to mutants
who'd visited this
bubble reality.



Query: What
do you know of the
Phalanx?



They're,
uh...they're a
cybernetic *hive mind*.
Exceptionally
bad news.

They were
created by *your*
people, Warlock, weren't
they? Sorry. The
Technarchy?

No.
Common
misapprehension.
Opposite is
true.

Phalanx. Higher-
dimensional intelligence
outside physical space.
Harvests the
lower planes.
Methodology?

Loimophagia.
Consumption via
infection. *Plague-*
sustenance.

Phalanx scatters
viral life across multiple
realities. Wherever contagion
reaches critical mass, virus
becomes *intelligent*.
Gestalt society
forms.

Becomes
Technarchy.



Technarchies explore. Infect.
Destroy.

But...whenever
powerful or novel
modes of being
are discovered--

He
means places
like *this*.

--then an
unusual *algorithm*
is triggered.

Scenario:

Transmode virus encounters advanced ecosphere. Too valuable to merely consume for self-replication. *Changes behavior.* Builds Babel Spire.

Like ringing a dinner bell for God.

Local Technarchy is summoned--responds without conscious thought.

All novel findings rendered as data for enrichment of Phalanx.

All waste purged.

Technarchies are *unaware* of their role as slaves. Believe themselves self-determinist. Only thanks to self's unique *perceptions* can self behold truth.

He means me. We're *soulbonded*--I help him see things as they are.

Self is fortunate that self's unique *cybermorphology* prevents self from thoughtlessly enacting core functions.

He means--

--he's a mutant, aye.

Otherwise, self would likely have been drawn back to native hive upon destruction of *System-Magus*. You saw my father die, yes, self friend Ruth?

I believe *these* are his ashes.



Wh-what...?

Yes.
Viral bodies
take *multiple*
forms. Cybernetic.
Biopsychic.
Matholiturigical.
And--*astral*.

Even in *ideaspace*,
Phalanx must have its
fingers and *eyes*.



You're
saying these are...
probes?

More like *spores*. Little
wisps of *curiosity* and
inspection.

And
hunger.

Given *critical*
mass and presence of
novel mutant community,
self believes they will
eventually send
out *call*.



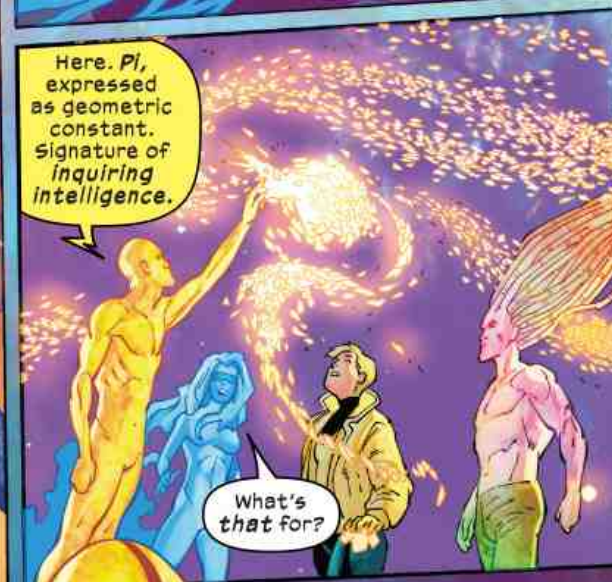
Easy enough
to test. David, would
you be able to *gather up*
all the blooms that
have drifted i--

Way
ahead of
you.

I'll not
have the bloody
things floatin' about
in *my* head
anymore.



Here, *PI*,
expressed
as geometric
constant.
Signature of
Inquiring
Intelligence.



What's
that for?

Bait.

Just as
the *fingers* and
eyes of the *Phalanx*
may take many
forms--





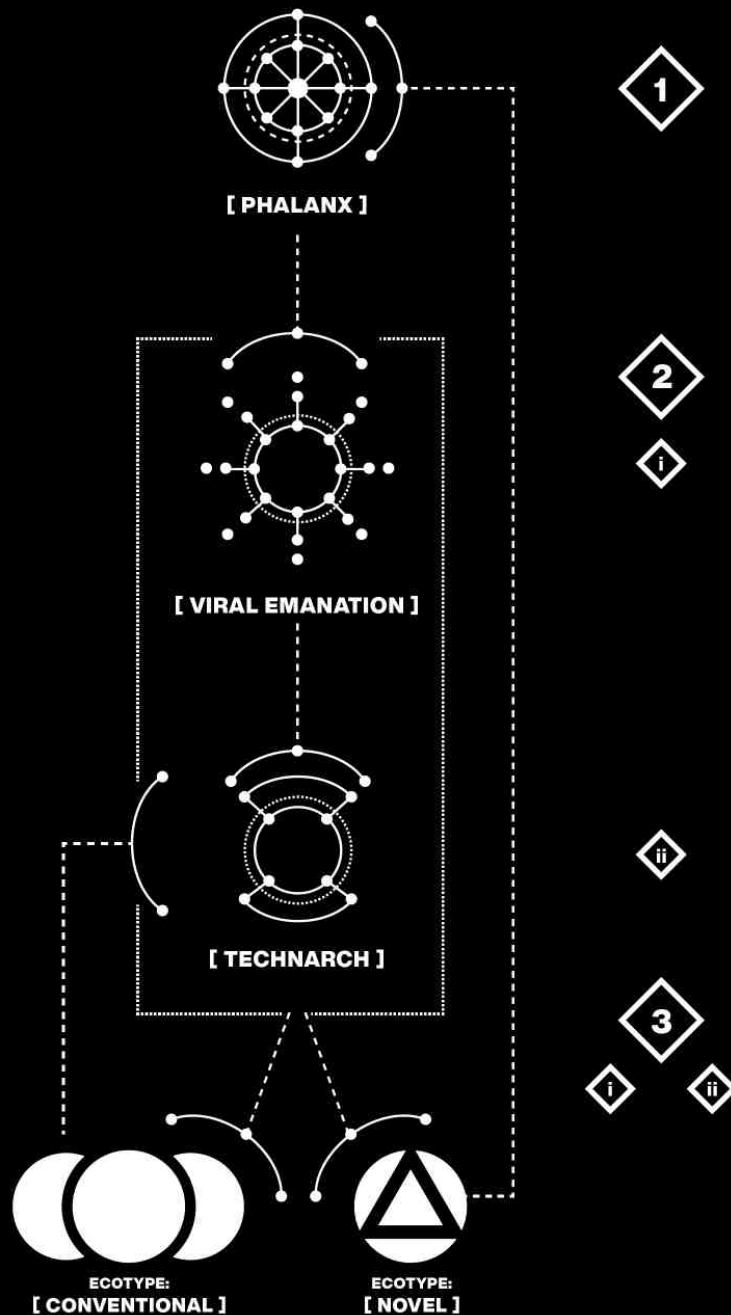
--so
too does the
mouth.

Astral
Technarchy.

Astral
Technarchy.

PHALANX // TECHNARCHY

LIFE CYCLE



1: PHALANX

[galactic-scale intelligence / type III civilization]

Existing across multiple dimensions, a Phalanx creates and emanates semi-autonomous viral mechanisms capable of the exploration and exploitation of any plane of reality, be it physical, magical, mathematical, oneirological, energistic, metafictional or ██████████.

A Phalanx exists solely to fulfill its own intelligence needs.

2: LOIMOPHAGES

(i) [harvest / purge mechanism]

To locate and consume resources, a Phalanx seeds all available planes of reality with multiple forms of viral entities. At their most basic, these infectious quanta simply drift, dormant, until they encounter an exploitable resource. This they assimilate, self-replicating on a massive scale. [NB: To residents of the local physical plane, the best-known example is the so-called "Transmode Virus," which processes biomass into cybernetic systems.]

A viral emanation exists solely to convert prey worlds into itself.

(ii) [technarchy / autonomous viral civilization]

When a viral emanation reaches a particular threshold of informational density, it achieves a level of gestalt self-awareness and becomes Technarchy. Irrespective of its cultural complexity, the methodologies remain the same: A Technarch explores, infects, feeds, and replicates. It simply does so with more intellectual agency than the viral quanta from which it derives.

Almost all technarchies remain unaware of their role in the feeding cycle of a Phalanx.

3: PREY WORLDS

(i) [conventional ecotype]

If a loimophage encounters an exploitable ecosystem whose nature is already known to the Phalanx, a standard FEEDING / SELF-REPLICATING strategy is pursued. Should the scale of the task or the defensive strength of the prey world require it, viral entities may construct a **BABEL SPIRE** to summon additional loimophagic strength to aid the harvest.

All conventional ecotypes are annihilated in the assimilation process.

In this way does the Phalanx purge superfluous data from the system.

(ii) [novel ecotype]

If a loimophage encounters an ecosystem whose nature is novel, eccentric, exotic, or otherwise of interest to the Phalanx, **ASCENSION** is initiated. Loimophagic drones enter a state of unthinking subservience. Assimilation continues as before, but harvested resources are no longer committed to self-replication. Instead, they are rendered as data and transmitted directly to the parent Phalanx. (Some prey cultures have embraced this fate, regarding Ascension as a form of rapture or dimensional sublimation. In this, they are mistaken. Ascension is consumption.) Once the harvest is complete, Technarchs are restored to sentience, with only the vaguest memory -- often interpreted as a metaphysical event -- of the missing time.

In this way does the Phalanx absorb all that is not Phalanx.

Krakoa.
Bar Sinister.

Absolutely and profoundly not.

I will not allow such a *ghastly perversion* of the mutant genotype to enter my lab. One has *standards*.

Sinister, it's--it's just a pair of horns. I was hoping you could help u--

Not you, goat boy. I refer to the *blowing charlatan* in Kitchen whites.

This is a place for *science*, not *toadstool colonies* with pretensions of grandeur.

Science? You wouldn't know the *empirical method* if it transformed into a pot of *hair grease* and claimed to enjoy your punch lines.

Nemesis, maybe you should wait outside...?

Please. The only *lines* worth punching *here* are the many--*maaaany*--on your face.

Oh! *Ageism*, is it? Two hundred years of *scattergunning* clumsy hypotheses into *petri dishes* and what's he got to show for it?

A kink for *shredded shower curtains* and the *Sewer Diver's Guide to Collecting Mutant DNA*.

Ow.

Mm, what's your mutation again, Nemesis? "Self-evolved intellect," wasn't it?

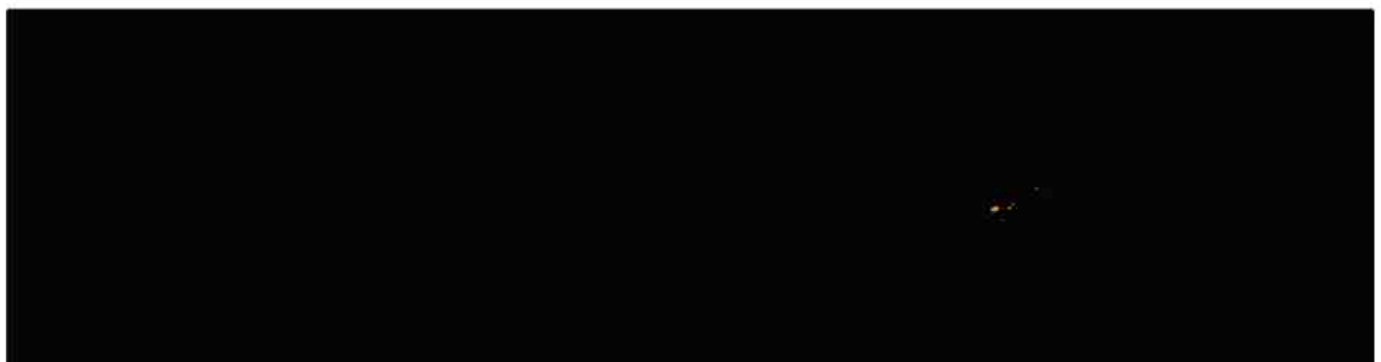
So your uncanny ability is *always wanting to be cleverer than you actually are*? Got it, got it.

But that's not the only thing he self-evolves, if you know what I mean.

Now see here, you--

Herr Doctor, whatever *else* Sinister is, he is the foremost authority on *mutation*. Please--let him work.







Call
me Vox
Ignis.

Voice...of
the fire...? Sean,
what **happened**
to y--?

No time
for that. Here's
what **matters**,
Nightcrawler. **Number**
one: We're on
your side.

And **number**
two... you're dead.
Sorry about that,
altogether.

D...
d--?

You are
between worlds,
Nightcrawler. But do
not fear. You are due
for **resurrection**.
You will not
remember
this.

I just
came to tell ye...
if anything **sticks** in
that big **heart** 'a
yours...? Let it
be **this**:

The boy.
Legion. Protect
him, Kurt. I've been
shown what happens
if he faces the
future alone...

And--tell
him. Tell him from
Mother Righteous
and me--

--he needs
all the help he
can get.

SPLOOOORRB

--won't tell
you *again*, Sinister--
we're too damn busy
for your @!%&.

If you
wanna go around
restoring factory
settings, find some
other resurrection
crew.

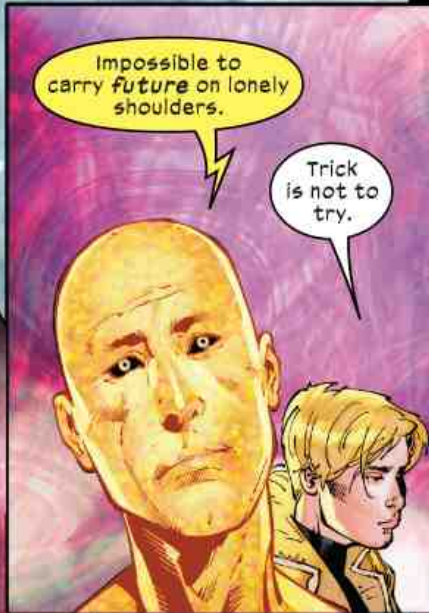
...Bitte...a
little quiet...
There's--there's
something I must
remember. I-it's
fading...

We need...
we need to
protect...

...um.

What's
everyone staring
at?





Impossible to carry *future* on lonely shoulders.

Trick is not to try.

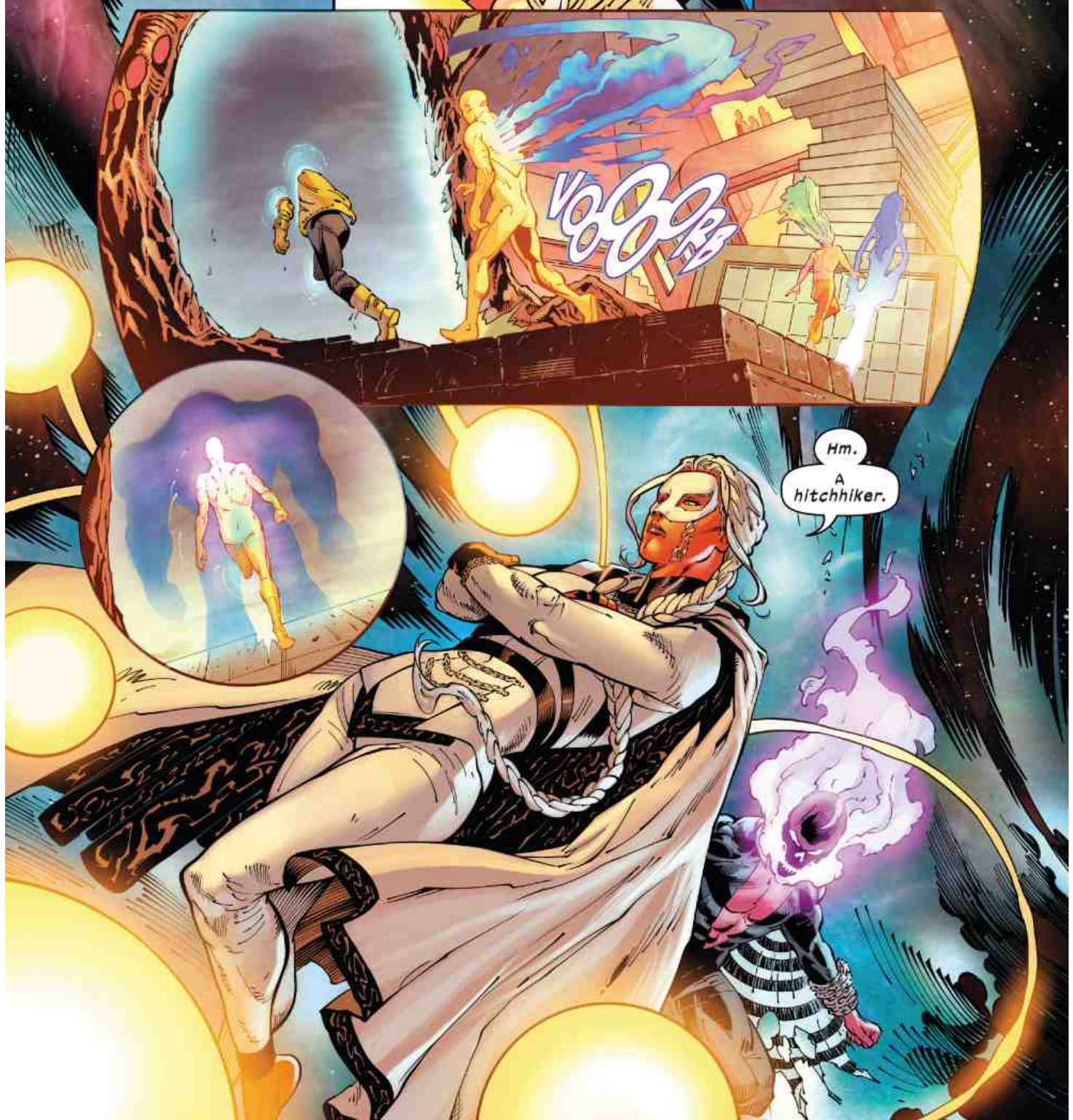


Well, *that's* more like it. Couldn't have said it better myself--

...M-Mother Righteous? What is it? What have you seen?



Come back soon, eh? Always welcome.



Hm.
A hitchhiker.

The Station. HQ of the Legion of X.

You were
right, Nemesis. Sinister
was no help.

I think
you've earned a little
gloating.

Oh, please.
If I was *that* petty,
I'd simply use a quantum
stylus to inscribe "*toldja
so*" on the inside of
your eyelids.

(Note to
self--invent quantum
stylus.)

As a
matter of fact,
I have **good**
news.

Whatever phenomenon rooted this
morphic adjustment so deeply
in your *genetic substrate* that
even the *Five* couldn't
purge it--

--I've found a
match. A *morphic
signature*--growing in
intensity. I expect to
see *more cases*
very soon.

That's--good
news?

Oh yes.
Stronger effect,
easier to *pinpoint*. It's
definitely *mutant* in
origin, but--

--but
it's been
adapted.

The *souldagger's*
been vibrating like a
tuning fork since Doc
found the match. I'd
like to see what's
causing it.

Would...would
you *accompany*
us, Herr Doctor?
I would
understand if
not. I should have
listened to you
sooner.

+Sigh+ Well, I
suppose I might
be persuaded to
tag along...

...in a strictly
observational
capacity.

Los Angeles.

Where did you go, creature?

Fair warning-- you might be 'ard enough to take out a playboy one-percenter, but you're up to your *arse* in trouble now.

The Black Knight does *not* go down so easy.







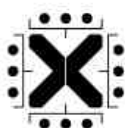
I think
that /s
Angel.



Tooooooldjassaaaa
sssssssoooooo.

To be continued...

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NEXT



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